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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND
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Resumed thirty-second session
31 August-18 September 1992
Agenda item 9

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE AT ITS RESUMED THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

II. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997

Programme 38. Public information

1. At its 37th and 38th meetings, on 14 September 1992, the Committee considered the proposed revisions to programme 38 (Public information) of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (A/47/6 (Prog. 38)).

Discussion

2. A number of delegations expressed the view that the new functions proposed for transfer to programme 38 would significantly change the nature of the work carried out by the Department of Public Information and went beyond the title of the programme. Concern was expressed that the Department would not be able to absorb those functions within the related resources proposed for transfer and that there might be a negative impact on existing

programmes. Other delegations welcomed the proposed consolidation of information functions and hoped that it would permit more effective delivery of programmes.

3. One delegation queried the apparent citation as a mandate in the proposed revision to paragraph 38.1 of the statement adopted by the Security Council at its first meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government on 31 January 1992.

4. Another delegation suggested that the proposed new paragraph 38.3 should be split, with the second and third sentences becoming a new paragraph 38.4. It was also suggested that the proposed new paragraph 38.4 (e) was similar to the existing paragraph 38.4 (d) and that the two could be merged.

5. A number of delegations emphasized the importance of the role of the United Nations Information Centres in spreading awareness of the role of the Organization, especially in the current rapidly changing world environment. Concern was expressed at the concentration of resources on a few Centres in developed countries and it was suggested that resources should be redeployed to strengthen Information Centres in developing countries.

6. A number of delegations queried the proposed role of the United Nations Information Centres in collecting information for dissemination at Headquarters and whether it fell within their mandate.

7. A number of delegations raised questions concerning the integration of field information functions between the Centres and the United Nations Development Programme and one delegation wondered why this had not figured in the proposed revisions to the plan. The possibilities for increased efficiency and effectiveness were welcomed, but concern was expressed that the mandates and role of the Centres should continue to be respected.

8. One delegation expressed concern that the functions included under the proposed new paragraphs 38.17 (m) to (q) risked duplicating activities of other departments, especially the Department of Political Affairs.

9. One delegation welcomed the consolidation under this programme of servicing functions for the Publications Board and expressed the hope that the Board would continue to contribute to improvements in the content and implementation of the Organization's publications programme. Other delegations stressed the role of relevant intergovernmental organs in this respect, including the Committee on Conferences and the Committee on Information.

10. One delegation expressed concern at possible duplication between the Department of Public Information and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Public Affairs, especially with regard to activities related to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

11. Another delegation suggested that activities related to collection and dissemination of information should be included in a separate new subprogramme.

Conclusions and recommendations

[12. The Committee emphasized that the new activities provided for under the proposed revisions to programme 38 should not adversely affect the implementation of the other activities under this programme.]

13. The Committee recommended the approval of the revisions to programme 38 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 [with the following modification:

(a) the institutional arrangements to discharge the functions transferred from the former Office for Research and the Collection of Information will be reformulated with due attention to the agreed mandate of the United Nations Information Centres.]